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Bush Sees Bonanza In Pilot's Defection With a Soviet MIG

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 19.—George Bush, Director of Central Intelligence, said today that the defection Sept. 6 of Lieut. Viktor I. Belenko at the controls of a Soviet MIG-25 interceptor "is probably a major intelligence bonanza" for the West.

In the first public comment by the Ford Administration on the usefulness of the plane and of the defector, Mr. Bush said further that intelligence debriefing of the Soviet pilot was "going well," and would continue for a long time.

Another Administration official said that the Russian pilot had already provided United States Air Force and intelligence officials with details of hitherto unknown Soviet military installations in Siberia, where he had been stationed before he escaped to Japan.

Lieutenant Belenko told Japanese authorities that he was seeking political asylum in the United States, and he was flown to this country on Sept. 9. He is apparently being debriefed near Washington.

'His Own Free Will'

Mr. Bush, who spoke on the ABC television program "Issues and Answers," said that Lieutenant Belenko came West "of his own free will." This was an allusion to a press report that the Central Intelligence Agency had recruited him earlier.

The report, in last week's edition of Stern, the West German magazine, was dismissed yesterday by a State Department spokesman as "wildly speculative" and unworthy of further comment. Another Administration official dismissed the report as simply untrue.

In other comments, Mr. Bush said that American intelligence assessments of the situation in Southern Africa indicated that there had been "deterioration" in white-ruled Rhodesia, adding, "The status quo appears to be intolerable."

He spoke of "mounting militancy" on the part of black Africans within and without Rhodesia, and said he expected that "if there was no political solution, a serious situation in which you could have a mass slaughter of people in Rhodesia."

"You have more than a guerrilla war situation," he said.



Associated Press

George Bush commenting yesterday on defection of a Soviet air officer.

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